

THE INFLUENCE OF PRINT MEDIA ON SHAPING PUBLIC OPINION TOWARDS ISLAM: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

*This paper examined the construction and dissemination of representations of Islam in mainstream Pakistani print media and their impact on public opinion. Employing **Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)** as the methodological framework, the research drew on Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional model, van Dijk's (1998) socio-cognitive approach, and the discourse-historical approach of Reisigl and Wodak (2001). The data comprised a purposive sample of newspaper articles, editorials, and opinion columns from two national newspapers, Dawn and The Nation, covering the period 2024–2025. The qualitative analysis aimed to identify recurrent themes, ideological stances, and discursive strategies shaping societal perceptions of Islam. Special attention was given to linguistic features, including lexical choices, metaphors, passive constructions, nominalization, and evaluative language, to uncover underlying ideological and power structures. The study further explored how these textual practices were connected to broader socio-political discourses and contributed to constructing dominant narratives about Islam and Muslim identities. The findings revealed coherent discursive patterns portraying Islam and Muslims either as moral guides or as socio-political concerns, inter-discursive linkages between security, cultural identity, and global Muslim solidarity, and ways in which media discourse either reinforced or contested prevailing ideological positions. This paper also contributes to the growing literature on media discourse, ideology, and the social construction of religion, emphasizing the role of language in shaping public opinion, social perceptions, and power dynamics. By highlighting how print media mediates ideology through textual and linguistic strategies, the study provides critical insights into the intersection of media, religion, and society in a South Asian context.*

Key words; Print Media, Islam, Ideology, Public Opinion, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Introduction

The role of the print media in forming a popular opinion about Islam has become a matter of serious academic interest in recent years, specifically in the post-9/11 world politics. The print media as a potent location of discourse is also central to creation of social realities and the formation of perceptions towards religious communities (Fairclough, 1995; Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000). Researchers have emphasized the fact that media discourse is not apolitical, and it is usually laced with ideological rudiments that may be structured to paint a picture of Islam and Muslims in a manner that supports stereotyping or social prejudices (Van Dijk, 1998; Said, 1997). It is therefore important to develop knowledge on the discursive approaches used by the print media to critically analyze how the opinion of the masses on Islam

is formed and mediated within the various sociopolitical situations (Elgamri, 2011; Richardson, 2004).

According to the research, representations of Islam in the mainstream print media tend to swing between dichotomous representations of moderate versus radical Muslim, which support polarized popular views (Halim Rane, 2021; Karim, 2006). The educational methods of the corpus-based and critical discourse analytical studies have demonstrated in a systematic way repeated lexical preferences, metaphors, and narrative frames representing Islam as opposition, extremism, or social backwardness (Alluhaidah, 2023; Li and Zhang, 2022; Oktaviani, 2023). Not only do they represent a wider societal concern but also help instil Islamophobic attitudes, which produce cognitively and emotionally motivated audiences toward Muslim communities (Muhammad and Ismail, 2024; Ullah, Shahzad, and Ali, 2024). These results highlight the role of centrality of the print media in the creation, reassurance and critique of the perception of Islam by the people.

CDA offers a very strong methodological approach to the interrogation of the power relations, the ideologies and the social impacts inherent in textual forms of the print media (Fairclough, 1995; Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000; Wodak, 2001). CDA enables scholars to reveal the hidden forces whereby media influences the attitudes of people in relation to Islam (Raza, Ullah, and Aasim, 2024; Saeed, Umer, and Sarosh, 2022). In addition, counter-narratives are described as strategic in light of reducing stereotypes and helping to better understand the identity of Muslims (Elamin, 2024; Sabir, 2023). These methods prove that media representation is not only a mirror of the ideologies that are practiced in society, but also a field of struggle and compromise.

Lastly, the global and comparative aspects of media manifestation imply that the influence of print media on how people perceive Islamic faith in different countries and cultures is different (Bajuwaiber, 2024; Rohmatullah & Degaf, 2025). To give a few examples, Western broadsheets used to use Orientalist patterns to formulate Islam as other and potentially dangerous (Elgamri, 2011; Said, 1997), and media in Muslim majority countries negotiate mostly between nation, religion, and international discourses (Sabir, 2023; Muhammad and Ismail, 2024). Such variations underline the necessity of critical and context-sensitive analyses which consider the interaction of language, ideology and power in influencing the opinion of people. Overall, the print media turns out to be not only the reflection but also the shaper of societal attitudes and that is why it is important to employ the method of critical discourse analysis to examine how it affects the attitudes towards Islam.

the study has been described briefly, *The Influence of Print Media on Shaping Public Opinion towards Islam: A Critical Discourse Analysis*. It describes the background, importance, purpose of the research and guiding questions that direct the research. With a print media remaining one of the major information sources and opinion forming tools, the way Islam is represented in them has far-reaching consequences in terms of cohesion and intercultural understanding. This chapter also points out how the discourse in newspapers and magazines tends to represent more ideological and political forces that influence the perception of the reader. Through the application of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the study offered an insight into the linguistic and structural features that are employed to construct meanings about Islam and hence give an insight into how media discourse contributes or misguides the population about the religion and its adherents.

Since the acts of the late twentieth and first twenty-first centuries, such as the September 11 attacks, further wars in the Middle East, as well as the development of populist politics around the globe, the image of Islam and Muslims is often framed in the security-oriented or cultural-differences platforms. According to studies by Fairclough (1995), Said (1978) and van Dijk (1998), the mediated portrayal is seldom neutral; it is ideologically oriented and used to strengthen power relations and cultural dominance and subordination. Even in apparently objective reporting in newspapers, using more or less covert linguistic practices, which include presupposition, metaphor and lexical association, Iranian Islam was associated with terrorism, backwardness or a danger.

Research Problem

Although the literature on media representation of Islam in the West has been extensive, little attention has been given to how print media in Muslim-majority regions, particularly South Asia, constructs and disseminates discourses about Islam. Previous studies (Said, 1997; Karim, 2006; Elgamri, 2011) have shown that Western media often associate Islam with terrorism, extremism, and cultural alienation; however, these studies rarely examined the linguistic and ideological processes in non-Western societies where Islam functions not only as a religion but also as a dominant socio-political identity. In Pakistan, where the media serves both as a cultural mirror and a political instrument, newspapers play a crucial role in shaping societal attitudes and perceptions of Islam and Muslim identity. Despite this significance, empirical research on how linguistic strategies—including lexical choices, modality, metaphors, and framing—are employed to create specific impressions of Islam remains limited. Without such analysis, the interaction between discourse, ideology, and public opinion in a region that simultaneously produces and consumes Islamic representations cannot be fully understood. Therefore, this study addresses the gap by providing an in-depth, linguistically grounded critical discourse analysis of Pakistani print media, systematically examining the language, ideology, and rhetorical features embedded in media texts that influence mass perceptions of Islam.

Research aims

This study seeks to critically analyze the way the print media constructs and influences the opinion of the people about Islam based on the linguistic and ideological practices. The specific objective was;

1. To critically examine how Pakistani print media, Dawn and The Nation, represent Islam and Muslims through linguistic choices, ideological constructions, and discursive strategies, and to explore the role of these representations in shaping public opinion through CDA.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following key main research question;

1. How do Pakistani print media, Dawn and The Nation, represent Islam and Muslims through linguistic and discursive strategies, and how do these representations influence public opinion through CDA?

Significance of the Study

The study held theoretical, methodological, and practical significance. Theoretically, it shifted the discourse on media representation of Islam beyond Western-centric perspectives, providing regionally and culturally situated insights into how discourse operates within Islamic societies through the lens of Pakistani print media. Methodologically, it applied Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine the connection between linguistic features—such as lexical

choices, modality, and metaphors—and the ideological orientations of media texts, highlighting the interdisciplinary nature of how language both reflects and constructs social realities surrounding Islam. Practically, the findings offered value to journalists, policymakers, and educators by demonstrating how media discourse can reinforce or challenge prejudices against Islam, informing more balanced and inclusive coverage that fosters intercultural awareness. Additionally, the study contributed to academic fields including media studies, discourse analysis, and religious communication, providing empirically grounded insights into the ways Pakistani print media shapes public perceptions of Islam.

Review of Literature

The Islam and Muslims pictorialization in the print media has been a topic of debate in the sphere of media studies, and it was explored in terms of critical discourse analysis (CDA), as a method of questioning how the language and ideology can influence the mass perception (Fairclough, 1995; Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000; Wodak, 2001). Empirical evidence has demonstrated that the print media tend to present the concept of Islam in binary, that is, pitting the moderate and radical Muslims, which supports stereotypes and phobic tendencies (Halim Rane, 2021; Karim, 2006; Li and Zhang, 2022). The corpus-based analyses indicate common linguistic patterns and metaphors according to which Islam is associated with conflict, extremism, or even social backwardness (Alluhaidah, 2023; Oktaviani, 2023), whereas the other research demonstrates that the counter-narratives can be used to dispel the Islamophobic discourses, and the more desirable depictions of Islam might be promoted (Elamin, 2024; Sabir, 2023). Comparative analysis also shows that these representations differ depending on cultural and national backgrounds, where Western media tend to use orientalist tropes (Elgamri, 2011; Said, 1997; Richardson, 2004), but media in the majority of Muslim countries have to negotiate the religious, national, and global discourses (Muhammad & Ismail, 2024; Sabir, 2023). In aggregate, this literature is indicative of the imperative role played by print media in creating an image and image-making strategies on how Islam is portrayed among people and how these approaches can be effective in identifying the hidden ideologies and power relations within the media texts.

Researchers have tried to discover finer and reformist discourses in recent years. According to Rane (2021), some media sources have started to include moderate Muslim voices that help to build interfaith dialogue and cultural collaboration. Similarly, Abbas and Ekman (2023) found that counter-discourses in the European print media increased, focusing on the peaceful and humanitarian aspects of Islam.

At the local level, it has been found that the ideological influences are also reflected in the local media in the Muslim majority contexts. Zafar and Ahmad (2020) have discovered that Pakistani newspapers reproduce state-driven political discourse on Islam rather frequently, whereas Saeed (2022) discovered that despite the general positive portrayal of the religious values, the minority Muslim groups are still covered through rather biased frames that contribute to the overall division within the religious community.

These representations have been studied by some scholars in the language and discourse-analytic terms. As an example, the discussion by Khan et al. (2022) of the Western news media reveals that Islam and Muslims are continuously produced as security threats, through metaphors of invasion and warfare. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) was employed by Saeed, Umer, and Sarosh (2022) in examining the portrayal of Muslim women in American newspapers, in which they frequently discussed cases of oppression, veiling, or terrorist-linked individuals - as seen in how gender intersects with religion in their coverage. On the same note,

Li and Zhang (2022) utilized a corpus-based CDA to analyze the U.S. media across 17 years and found out that there are rather constant lexical patterns, which correlate Islam with extremism and social instability.

Advancing this linguistic direction, Alluhaidah (2023) has performed a systemic literature review of corpus-based research, displaying an increased methodological shift in quantitative linguistics in media analysis. To complement this, Oktaviani (2023) used corpus-assisted CDA to Indian newspapers (2019-2022), offering important insights into how the South Asian media construct the image of Islam - a region that has been previously muted by earlier studies on the subject that have been predominantly Western-centric.

Moving to the European context, Sabir (2024) studied the media content of the French television and discovered that the media discourses mythologize and dramatize the Islamic faith, perpetuating the so-called sense of otherness. The Identity of Religion Always Comes Up: The War, the Mass Media, and the Reproduction of Muslim Identity in the West (2024) was another study, which examined Western discourses of war and identity and supported the metaphor of conflict further in the representation of the Muslims.

In a cross-regional linguistic perspective, Rohmatullah and Degaf (2024) examined the application of euphemism and dysphemism in the media of Southeast Asia and the Middle East and found that language could be used to subtly form ideological stances using modality and lexical selection. Bajuwaiber (2024) has provided the historical progression of Orientalism to Islamophobia in Hollywood and Egyptian cinema, how the visual and cultural media reproduce the same stereotypes within print journalism.

Simultaneously, there is an increasing amount of literature indicating the Islamophobic discourse within the digital and international press. Izaz et al. (2024) explored the misrepresentation of Muslims in world media and have validated the existence of the negative framing associated with it whereby Muslims are addressed as terrorists. The study by Raza, Ullah, and Aasim (2024) critically examined English-language news and television using the CDA model and found out that there are recurrent linguistic patterns, which associate Islam with violence and cultural incompatibility. Muhammad and Ismail (2024) also studied the Pakistani mainstream media, revealing that the reporting of religious minorities regardless of being Muslim or non-Muslim usually reflects ideological discourses of the state.

Recent studies have been extended to digital and multimodal media situations. In their article, Jishanul Islam et al. (2024) presented MIMIC, a model of identifying Islamophobic memes on social media which shows how hostility is reproduced with humour and metaphor using visual-textual content. Likewise, Asseri et al. (2025) investigated cultural bias against both Arabs and Muslims in large language models, which found that algorithmic bias in AI-based systems of the media remains.

Lastly, Elamin (2025) suggested a positive change with the help of strategic media representations that contrast Islamophobia by fostering interfaith and peace-directed and culturally equal portrayals. These affirmative discourses can be linked to the general shift to inclusivity and reassessing previously existing Orientalist paradigms.

Research Gap

Despite numerous studies on the representation of Islam and Muslims in global media, significant conceptual and contextual gaps remain. Early research focused predominantly on Western print media (Said, 1997; Poole, 2002; Richardson, 2004; Karim, 2006; Elgamri, 2011),

highlighting negative stereotypes such as terrorism, extremism, and cultural incompatibility, but offered little insight into non-Western or regional contexts where Islam functions as a socio-political and cultural force. Although recent scholarship has explored moderate and reformist narratives (Rane, 2021; Abbas & Ekman, 2023), these studies are largely limited to European contexts and fail to examine how Islamic representation is shaped in South Asia or Muslim-majority countries. Moreover, while some studies have applied Critical Discourse Analysis (Ullah et al., 2024; Raza et al., 2024; Muhammad & Ismail, 2024), few have analyzed lexical and rhetorical features—such as metaphors, modality, and evaluative adjectives—and their direct influence on audience perception and opinion formation. Existing research is also temporally skewed, focusing mainly on the post-9/11 era, neglecting newer trends such as digital-print convergence, online newspaper adaptations, and algorithm-driven content dissemination. Finally, little to no research has systematically examined the role of linguistic strategies in modern print and online media in shaping public opinion toward Islam in Pakistan and South Asia, despite emerging studies addressing Islamophobia in AI systems and visual memes (Asseri et al., 2025; Islam et al., 2024).

Research Model

Theoretical Framework

The current paper was based on the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework that offers a methodological way of the analysis of the correlation between language, power, and ideology in media discourse. CDA does not understand language only as a means of communication, but as a social practice, which reflects and controls the organization of the society and ideologies (Fairclough, 1995; Dijk, 1998; Wodak, 2001).

Fairclough (1995) developed a three-dimensional model of discourse analysis, which assumes analyzing discourse at three levels, which are all interrelated; This framework was especially appropriate in analyzing the print media since it gives the researcher the opportunity to explore how news articles linguistically create meanings and how these meanings recreate ideological stances of Islam and Muslim identity.

As an addition to the model offered by Fairclough, the socio-cognitive approach suggested by Van Dijk (1998) emphasizes the importance of mental models and mutual social thinking in forming the popular opinion. Van Dijk believes that the media discourse processes shape the perception of the reader about social groups in terms of the us versus them dichotomy, and usually identifies the Muslims as an outsider or a threat to the social order. The theory can be used to connect the linguistic forms in media texts with cognitive and ideological impacts on the audience to confirm the aim of the study by analyzing the way media discourse influences the attitudes of the population about Islam.

These frameworks offered a full theoretical perspective using which the interaction of language, ideology and power in print media discourse can be analyzed. The linguistic and structural analysis of texts is steered by Faircloughs model, cognitive and ideological dimension is elaborated through Van Dijk and the contextualization of discourse in the socio-political context of Pakistan is done by (Wodak, 2001).

This study uses theoretical approaches formulated by Fairclough (1989, 1995), van Dijk (1998, 2000), and Wodak (2001) to critically examine how the print media in constructing the opinion of people to Islam. Both models have a unique, but complementary view of the interaction of language, power, and ideology in discourse.

The Three-Dimensional Model of Fairclough

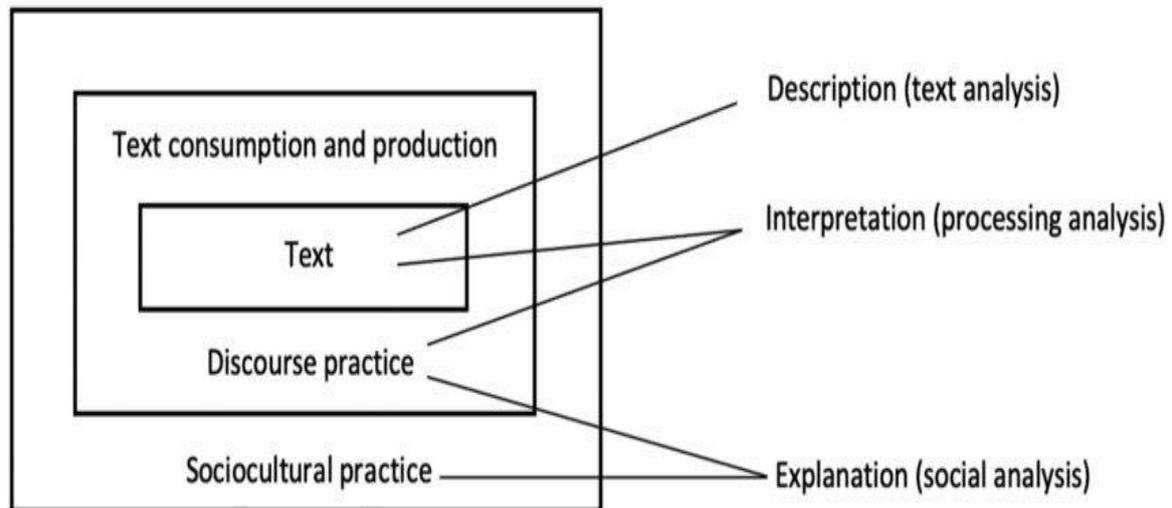


Figure 1: Fairclough's (1992) three-dimensional model for CDA

The model of Fairclough regards discourse as a social practice and comprises three dimensions, which are interrelated and include the textual analysis (description), discursive practice (interpretation), and social practice (explanation). The textual level looks at some of the linguistic characteristics of vocabulary, grammar, and cohesion; the discursive practice level looks at how discourse is produced, distributed, and consumed; and the social practice level looks at the larger socio-political setting within which the discourse is practised. The framework to be applied in this research paper to reveal the use of linguistic and structural decisions in the process of making Islam appear in a manner that highlights and reinforces the ideological power relations is the framework of Fairclough.

Thus, this study was a hybrid CDA approach, which was a combination of textual, cognitive, and contextual analysis of the text to reveal the way Islam is portrayed in Pakistani print media and shapes people's opinion.

Conceptual Framework

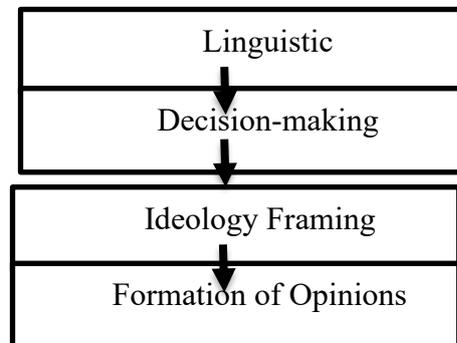
The conceptual underpinning of the current paper was premised on the assumption that the language employed in the print media is central in the construction of ideological meanings, which subsequently influence the opinion of the population on Islam. Based on the theoretical background of Fairclough (1995), Van Dijk (1998) and Wodak (2001), the framework presents the process and mechanisms of media discourse within the three frameworks of linguistic, ideological and social.

The newspapers used certain lexical selection, metaphors, evaluative adjectives and modal verbs to portray Islam in a certain manner at the level of language. These are not the neutral features of languages, but code value judgments and ideological stands that portray Islam as either negative or positive.

These language patterns were mirrors of the ideology and power dynamics of the media establishment at the ideological level. Media texts by definition, as Fairclough (1995) and Van Dijk (1998) point out tend to recreate dominant ideologies either sustaining or undermining the existing social and political systems. The ideological construction of Islam in the print media

can therefore show the socio-political forces behind it, nationalism, sectarianism, or the state-centered accounts.

This model thus suggests a causality chain;



The three-layered model through a critical analysis of the news articles in Pakistan aims to find out how the discourse of the print media in Pakistan constructs the meanings on Islam and how they influence the attitudes and ideas of the society.

Research Methodology

The research methodology provides the outline of systematic approach to be used and the steps involved to the study the effect of print media in shaping public opinion about Islam via discourse and representation. This qualitative research design is based on the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in order to examine the linguistic, ideological, and rhetorical patterns of the newspaper articles, editorials, and reports. The approach to the relationship between language and power revealed in media discourses, the approach is based on conceptualizations of Fairclough (1995), van Dijk (1998), and Wodak (2001). Purposive sampling was used to select the relevant print media texts and analyze them critically to determine similar themes, ideological positions, and discursive strategies.

Research Design

The present study was based on a qualitative research design, where the focus is on meaning, and is not on measuring. The research design is suitable as it was enable the researcher to explore the way language and discourse influence the way Islam was perceived by masses by the media. The theoretical and methodological framework used in the study is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to find the ideologies and power relations that exist behind the selected print media texts.

Data Site

The data site of the current paper was in the form of national English-language newspapers (The Nation, Dawn) published between 2024 and 2025, which have covered the problem of Islam, Muslims, or Islamic societies. A purposive sampling technique was used in the selection of the newspaper's articles the most relevant to the research purposes. The sample of the current paper was 8 reports from Dawn (4 reports), The Nation (4 reports). These 8 reports were selected to provide a more or less balanced coverage of various positions and the ideological orientations.

Data Collection Method

The data was collected in both online and paper archives of the chosen newspapers. The selected articles were devoted to the reasons like the Islamic culture, terrorism, extremism, political Islam, and the relations between religions. All the articles were archived, coded, and

sorted in terms of date of publication, topic, and tone. Then the texts were ready to be analysed using more sophisticated discourse means in order to detect the tendencies of language use, vocabulary selection, and framing of the narrative concerning Islam and Muslims (Bryman, 2016).

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework in a 3-dimensional framework as proposed by Fairclough, whereby representation, discursive and social practices of a text was included. This model offers an all-encompassing effort to analyze the construction and representation of language, ideology and power relations in print media as well. The gathered data comprise the information on twenty news items, ten about The Dawn and ten about The Nation, released in 2023-2025, which covered the aspects of describing Islam and its identity in various socio-political contexts. The analysis seeks to identify the hidden ideologies and grammatical patterns that prevail the mass opinion about Islam and how the use of language in the media can affect thinkers and their opinions. This stage of the research aims at proving the relationships between the structure of languages and their presence in wider society through systematic coding and interpretation.

Analysis of News Reports (DAWN)

The following data was analyzed based on Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model of Dawn news reports;

Report 1:

"US anti-Muslim incidents rose about 70pc in 2024: WASHINGTON: Discrimination and attacks against Muslims and Palestinians rose by about 70 per cent in the United States in the first half of 2024 amid heightened Islamophobia due to Israel's aggression in Gaza, the Council on American-Islamic Relations advocacy group said on Tuesday."

Date: 31 July 2024

Textual Analysis:

In this news report, it is clear that the article highlights the various forms of leadership and governance present in Asian nations, and that China as a country has undergone multiple systems. The text contains a considerable quantity of descriptive science, employing numerous expressions to detail the visual elements within the photograph. There is a significant amount of descriptive science found in the text, as there are several expressions that serve to describe all the visual components of the photograph.

The report notes that the level of anti-Muslim and anti-Palestinian attacks in the United States is on a sharp rise with examples of the statistics issued by a Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR). The paper uses cold, objective analysis to highlight the magnitude of the acts of Islamophobia attributing it to the geopolitics of tension that followed the Gaza conflict. Such words as attacks, discrimination, rose by about 70 per cent, carry evaluative and quantitative weight and this arouses the sense of urgency without being particularly sensational. Passive structures such as those used in reporting, as, were reported are used to subtly detach the agency and draw attention instead on the victims as opposed to the perpetrators. Lexical field includes words that suggest injustice and marginalization making it the primary highlight to the suffering of Muslims subjected to animosity in the West.

Discursive Practices:

This news article is generated as part of a discourse that bridges the global political happenings of the Gaza war with the home based impacts of Islamophobia in the Western countries. Using CAIR data and reporting by Reuters, Dawn recreates and validates a transnational narrative that positions Muslims as vulnerable groups of minorities who are affected by geopolitical

discourse of terrorism and extremism. The quality of intertextual presence of Western media content gives the problem credibility and universalism, making the newspaper one of the actors at the national and international levels to influence awareness in relation to the anti-Islamic sentiment. This discussion has denied the view of Islam as an object of fear, but as the victim of structural bias hence reversing such stereotypical imagery in certain western media. Generally speaking, this social practice consists of two parts: the subject and the audience

Social Practice (Explanation):

On the socio-cultural level, the given report represents the practice of the Pakistani media to trace the sources of the international Islamophobic events on the larger scale of the Western prejudice and the marginalization of the Muslim community across the world. It goes hand in hand with national identity politics which predicts solidarity with the Muslim ummah. The report gains public sympathy by exaggerating these statistics creating awareness of religious discrimination of foreign people and strengthens the collective notions regarding the representation of Islam. The story is a critique of the moral hypocrisies in the western societies- that encourage freedom but tolerate bigotry. By so doing, Dawn contributes to the formation of constructs about Islam as being under attack by the Pakistani readers, hence. This instills solidarity and opposition towards perceived injustice against Muslims in the world.

Report 2:

"Police get fatwa declaring wheelie, kite flying, aerial firing 'un-Islamic': LAHORE: The religious scholars of the Darul Iftah Jamia Naeemia in consultation with the Lahore police department have issued a Fatwa, declaring three crimes – one-wheelie, kite flying and aerial firing – un-Islamic."

Date: 22 January 2025

Textual Analysis (Description):

In this report, the religious scholars, together with the police, declared a fatwa denouncing some of the activities of youth some of which include one-wheelie stunts, kite flying and aerial firing as un-Islamic. This has an official and authoritative language, using verbs such as making announcements, released and prohibited, which indicate power and moral control. The moral dimension is prefigured by the repetitive use of such term as un-Islamic, and institutional legitimacy is obtained by mentioning law enforcement. The syntax of the article is formal and educative and the article does not use emotive words but, there is moral undercurrents that may have hinted the integration of religion and governance in the determination of the behavior of people.

Discursive Practice (Interpretation):

The report is being conducted within a moral policing and social discipline discourse that is based on religious and legal authority. This claim by posing fatwa as a collaborative action between the religious scholars and the police helps the article in creating a justification story where Islamic morality and civic rule coincide. The discussion is based on inter-discursive sources: Islamic jurisprudence, the regulations of the public safety and the civic morality. Presentation by Dawn is neither pro nor con about the institutionalization of religion as a guide to law enforcement. By doing this the media will contribute to spreading the notion that measures of keeping the public safe is morally empowered when it has religious validation and creates a collective social perception of what is permitted behavior under the Islamic religion.

Social Practice (Explanation):

The bigger societal picture is based on the fact that this report is indicative of the dynamic Pakistani social/political framework in which religion is the moral guide in governance of

people. The partnership between the religious scholars and the police is portrayed as a long-term association between the religious credibility and the state power. The coverage supports the intensification of the civil administration of the religious discourse by depicting Islam as a source of morality and law, which shape the lives of the people in the civil world. It is those representations that shape the opinion of the masses by combining the civic devotion with the religious devotion and expecting that a good citizen is a good Muslim. Therefore, the report will lead to the societal acceptance of faith-based regulatory practices in Pakistani socio-cultural setting.

Report 3

“Call for greater inclusivity of minorities: KARACHI: With an aim to explore strategies to enhance inclusivity, a diverse group of individuals, representing various faiths, aired their views regarding their representation in the media at a programme organised by the Karachi Chapter of the Pakistan-US Alumni Network (PUAN) with support of the US Mission in Pakistan held at the Holy Trinity Cathedral here on Saturday.”

Date: 28 April, 2024

Textual Analysis

An inclusive and neutral tone is used in this report since the focus is on dialogue, participation and representation. Words like greater inclusivity, diverse group, various faiths, and aired their views are used to foreground the use of pluralism and collective participation instead of conflict amongst the lexical choices. The syntax remains formal and descriptive focusing less on personal feelings and more on the purpose of the event and the events surrounding it. The tastes of institutional legitimacy are built in allusion to formalized institutions like the Pakistan-US Alumni Network (PUAN) and the US Mission in Pakistan, which act as authoritative listeners of the conversation. The venue, Holy Trinity Cathedral, is also symbolically used to enhance the theme of minority representation without being confrontational. In contrast to reports that apply moral judgment or harsh language, this article does not include prescriptive or emotive statements but displays inclusivity as an affirmative and consultative procedure.

Discursive

The report works in the discourse of democratic participation, minority rights and media accountability. The article creates an inclusivity as a common goal of the society rather than an issue of the periphery by featuring voices of different religions. The participation of both PUAN and the US Mission creates an interdiscursive connection between the life of civil society activism, international assistance and media morality. The framing of Dawn is also purely observational, not taking sides on anything, or claiming to be more important than the status quo of the media, but it makes the concept of LGBT group representation seem something worth considering publicly a natural occurrence. The discursive approach encourages a non-dissenting dialogue instead of protest and an inclusiveness as an attainable result instead of a protestful and antagonistic one.

Social Practice (Explanation)

On the social practice level, the report indicates the general range of discussions within the Pakistani society about the issue of minority rights, religious pluralism, and mainstream representation. The coverage places inclusivity in a globalized and civic context whereby the international associations and local civil society overlap. The article moves the minority inclusion challenge to an issue of media representation as opposed to a religious challenge, a subt approach that also largely questions the dominant majoritarian narratives without telling them directly. The given representation helps to create a social construct of inclusivity as a progressive, socially acceptable, and internationally accepted value. As a result, the report will

contribute to the gradual process of pluralistic discourse normalization in the Pakistani socio-cultural and political context, where one should see minority groups, as an integral users of the national life and not as marginal communities.

Report 4

"The Muslim cause; The state's conduct belies its claims of upholding 'Muslim interests'."

Date: 10 October, 2025

Textual Analysis

The tone that has been used in the headline is that of critical and judgemental but at once the opinion here is one of disagreement as the use of contrast forms in The Muslim cause and the state conduct against the claims of the state. Of particular importance is the verb lie, which means deceit or contradiction, and this makes the state a state that has been rhetorically devoted but practically indifferent. The quotation marks that are surrounding the expression of Muslim interests add some doubt to it, and they also create some distance between the author and the official version. In the lexis, the text is based on abstraction and ideological words like state, conduct, claims, and interests that transform the discussion on individual cases to a systematic level. It is assertive and declarative syntax indicative of an authoritative editorial voice and not neutral report style, and it foreshadows responsibility instead of moralizing.

Discursive Analysis (Interpretation)

This reporting operates in a field of political discourse and ideological responsibility with the self-posed role of the state as a protector of the interests of Muslims being questioned instead of being unquestioned. The article uses interdiscursive sources of political commentary, religious identity and governance ethics. The discourse opposes the legitimization of religious authority by the political authorities through juxtaposing the Islamic identity with state behavior. The media platform displaces itself as a watchdog and challenges its audience to question any official accounts instead of internalizing them. This article destabilizes this congruency by making variance between hospitality and discourse evident, unlike reports that justify power by aligning the discourse with the religious orientation.

Social Practice (Explanation)

At the social practice level, the report mirrors the larger tensions in the societies where religion is often used to justify the policies of the state as well as political authority. The criticism is an indicator of increasing level of sensitivity by the citizens about the use of symbols of Islam in politics especially where these claims are not accompanied by moral and fair behavior. The article helps to create a counter-discourse by casting doubts on the sincerity with which the state itself served the interests of Muslims by doubting the possibility that the political expediency of the Muslim faith may have influenced Muslim sentiments. Such depiction can impact the perceptions of the society as it would make the citizens consider the governance in terms of justice and accountability and not just the rhetoric in religion. This is why the report contributes to the more critical and reflective popular discourse and questions the normalization of faith-based political legitimacy in the relative to the socio-political environment.

Analysis of News Reports (THE NATION)

Report 1:

"Propaganda and the Muslim World: From the Crusades to colonial conquests, "the East" has often been portrayed as the "Other" – exotic, dangerous, and fundamentally different"

Date: 29 January 2025

Textual Analysis

The report is a critical scrutiny of the role played by propaganda in miss representing the Muslims all over the world. The language is descriptive and philosophical, as words like

stereotypes, regressive, violent, etc. are used to explain the biased images that the specific media communication causes. The author uses comparison and contrast strategies (has perpetuated harmful stereotypes), as well as evaluative adjectives to criticize the dominant Western representations. The tone of the text is also persuasive and contemplative as it tends to show the artificiality of the anti-Muslim propaganda and to restore the moral ground in the name of Muslim identity.

This discourse is primarily an attempt to attain a semantic consensus among the relevant parties; most importantly, it is crucial to recognize that such consensus is, as it were, an art, and failing to achieve this standard is likely to result in disputes and strained ties between the involved parties.

Discursive Practice (Interpretation):

This article is engaging in the ideological discussion that has been raging in the discursive dimension concerning the media bias and the Orientalist images of Muslims. It places itself as part of the anti-discourse which contradicts the hegemonic Western images. The allusions to international events and injurious stereotypes put the argument in context concerning the discourses about post-9/11 terrorism and Islamophobia. The article creates a defensive idea of Islam as a misunderstood, marginalized, and misrepresented idea by the global media forces. By doing this, The Nation will become an ideological resistance mediator, allowing Pakistani readers to realize that global propaganda goes beyond religion and becomes a political concern.

Social Practicum (Explanation):

On the macrolevel, this opinion piece is a reflection of the sociopolitical situation of the postcolonial Muslim identity in general, and the issue of representational equity at large. There is a strong sense of nationalism and pan-Islamic nature in Pakistani discourse, where the article by positioning Western media as being in collusion with misinformation propagations conforms to nationalism. It aims to build group identity among the Muslim audiences through unity in victimhood and resilience. The article, therefore, serves as a critique and consciousness-raising piece that encourages a person to be vigilant about the use of the media and to critically respond to the global discourses that influence the general population thinking about Islam.

Report 2

“CM calls for global action against Islamophobia: LAHORE - Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has strongly condemned discrimination, hatred, and prejudice against Muslims worldwide, emphasizing the need for global action to combat Islamophobia. In her message on the International Day to Combat Islamophobia, she highlighted that Pakistan has taken a leading role in addressing this issue by presenting a resolution against Islamophobia at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). “Islam is a religion of mercy that teaches peace, love, tolerance, and human dignity,” she stated, expressing concern over the growing trend of propaganda against Islam and Muslims.”

Dated: March 16, 2025

Textual Analysis

The style of the report is formal and declarative and predominates with a foreground of political power and morality. The diction used to build Islamophobia as a pressing universal injustice includes the use of strongly condemned, discrimination, hatred, prejudice and global action. Moral and emotive dimension is also introduced with the repetitive appeal to Islam being a religion of mercy, peace, love, and human dignity, with the view to dispelling negative stereotypes. Institutional power and legitimacy is created by the prominence that is provided to the Punjab Chief Minister and the mentioning of international bodies like United Nations

General Assembly. The syntax depends upon affirmative and assertive statements, which make it unambiguous and imminent to inferences and revisions creating additional authority to the narrative.

Discursive Analysis

The report exists in a field of advocacy politics and religiousness, whereby state leadership identifies itself with protecting Islam and Muslims at the international level. The article uses interdiscursive associations of international diplomacy, self-identity of faith, and national pride by citing the International Day to Combat Islamophobia and Pakistan's participation at the UNGA. The framing of the Nation is biased toward positive attitude to the narrative of the state, offering the statements of the Chief Minister as morally acceptable and politically valuable. This discursive identity places the state as a safeguard of the Muslim interests and Islam is a religion universally peaceful thus necessitating political intervention in religious discourse.

Social Practice (Elucidation)

On the plane of the social practice, the report mirrors the wider socio-political context where the issues of Islamophobia can be discussed as a unified issue of the Muslim world wherein Pakistan projects itself as one at the forefront. The coverage popularizes the ingratiation of the role of the state in the definition and defence of religious identity, both at home and abroad. The article is relevant to the formation of collective consciousness concerning a common Muslim identity against the external aggression through the promotion of Islam as a moral code of peace and tolerance. This embodiment can enhance national and religious harmony and at the same time rationalize the need to hold the political authority accountable in protecting religious honor. Therefore, the report upholds the need to perpetuate religion, politics and international diplomacy in Pakistani socio-cultural discourse.

Report 3

"Gaza is Bleeding While Muslims Feast"

Dated: March 25, 2025

Textual Analysis

The title itself is emotionally appeal and challenging, with the use of a sharp but contrasting analogy of bleeding and feast to cause moral panic and sense of societal culpability. Past tense in the case of bleeding is used to indicate continuous pain whereas the usage of present tense in Muslims feast is the generalisation of collective identity, which enhances the moral responsibility. The language started by a metaphor leaves the area of disinterested reporting and takes the position of evaluative and accusing. Lexically, the headline has to be based on powerful emotive image in place of any institutional appeals, in foregrounding humanitarian crisis instead of political or legal discussion. The parallelism and the syntactic brevity of the text make it more influential as the message is hereby immediate and hard to disregard.

Discursive Analysis

The report acts in a world of moral disapproval and transnational religious unification. The article uses Islamic ethical responsibility to contrast the suffering of Gaza with a sense of complacency in the Muslim community by presenting the suffering of Gaza in contrast to the perceived indifference among the rest of the world, which regards itself as Muslim. The framing relies on interdiscursive features of the humanitarian discourse, religious moral teachings, and political commentaries. The media voice also establishes itself as a moral critic instead of a viewer and hastens self-examination and moral responsibility among the audience. As opposed to state-centred discourses, the subject matter under consideration shifts the blame

of institutions onto the overall religious society, making activism a moral decision-making process, not a political one.

Social Practice (Explanation)

On the social practice level, the report is a reflection of wider forces of Muslim societies in which the ethical and religious paths are taken to the world conflicts, in which the Muslim population is involved. The headline supports the notion that it has stood the test of time that religious identity implies moral responsibility crossing national boundaries. The article plays a role in developing the popular imagination concerning the issues of empathy, guilt, and moral action in the process of bringing inequality between misery and joy. Such representation can be a rallying call to charitable, political, or social action as well as create unease by upsetting the habits of a familiar way of life. In turn, it is the report that maintains a discussion in which the concept of religious solidarity and humanitarian concern are intertwined thus shaping the perception of the global crisis such as Gaza in the socio-cultural contexts of Muslims.

Report 4:

“Increasing Religious Intolerance”

Date: 28 October 2024

Textual Analysis

This report will deal with increasing problem of religious intolerance in Pakistan, in a restrained yet warning tone. Tensions, complex, and conflict are some of the words that signify the instability of religious coexistence. The syntax is analytically neutral and descriptive and interested in social harmony concerns. It is of a moderate level of criticism and thus implies that intolerance is a failure not only morally but also a societal failure. The lexis used by the author of the article like the complex landscape means the acknowledgment of diversity but one could say the diversity presented in the article is on the brink of becoming volatile.

Discursive Practice (Interpretation):

Discursively, this report is part of reformist and self-reflective discourse that recognises the internal social problems of the Muslim-majority environment. In contrast to the articles on external Islamophobia, the article shifts the sphere to the inner one, presenting the issue of intra-religious and inter-sectarian conflicts. It puts intolerance as a social sickness instead of resolute inevitability taught in doctrine. Through this, the newspaper is taking a self critically stance thus participating in a national debate of co existence and moderation. The intertextual reverberations of the policy speech and civic duty indicate that both morality and governance narratives are used as the source of the piece who suggests the proposal of social reform.

The social practice (Explanation):

Socio-culturally, the article indicates how Pakistan has a long way to go in terms of finding a balance between religious piety and pluralistic existence. It goes in line with the general discussions on patterns of extremism, civic duty, and the importance of tolerance in the Islamic society. By not ignoring the issue of religious differences, The Nation will establish itself as a conscientious media outlet that encourages social unity and moral consideration. The article is a counter statement to both the Islamophobia in foreign lands and sectarian intolerance within home countries, the article moulds the mind-set of the people towards a more moderate and less violent view of the role of Islam in society.

Results and Discussion

The critique of Dawn shows a preference of more balanced and contextualized linguistic manifests of Islam and Muslims through the use of formal terms, description structures and restrained assessing words in the argument of the news item on the issue of Islamophobia and state morality. This is in line with the studies of CDA of Pakistani print media, which provide

a focus on the manner in which Dawn presents the issue of religiousness that reflects a more real social currents and ideological leanings instead of the simplistic moralizing (Rubab, Jamil & Khan, 2023). These language expressions involve the application of contextual qualifiers and formal modality whose purpose is to show various aspects of a problem which has been identified in earlier studies to be a hallmark in the analytical style of Dawn. Consequently, the coverage presented by Dawn is inclined to forward neutral description and institutional legitimacy whereby a non emotive polarized presentation of Islam as a moral system and as a subject of socio political discourse is possible.

To the contrary, one can observe more ideological imprinting in the language used in The Nation which pays closer attention to moral assessment, collective identity and emotive constructs in the articles dealing with international Muslim issues, and perceived moral violations. This trend is echoed by the academic literature that reveals that the Pakistani print media tends to spread ideological stances by filtering information and polarizing lexis (Youseuf, Maryam & Naeem, 2024). The discourse in the country is often metaphoric and evaluative, which supports the ideological accounts, an element that leads to intensive discursive patterns that portrayed Islam not only as a religious faith but also as a political and moral issue. These discursive practices are useful in drawing readers closer to specifiable value systems and social commitments, with an example of how newspapers can be used as an agentive producer of meaning, as opposed to a mere reflective entity.

In comparison, although both Dawn and The Nation are involved in the process of representing the Muslim and Islam in social discourse, the discursive and ideological parameters through which they are applied influence the views of people in various ways. It has been found that Dawn has a reporting bias, which is closer to contextual neutrality and balanced framing, and it is in line with the findings that Dawn is embedded in complex social realities (Rubab, Jamil & Khan, 2023). In the meantime, The Nation also uses more ideologically charged messages to frame Islam as part of the moral and political discourse that appeals to the emotions of readers, and such a trend is equally noticeable in the studies of CDA dedicated to the exploration of the ideological proliferation on the basis of media columns (Youseuf, Maryam and Naeem, 2024;). These comparisons indicate the varying levels of the print media outlets in Pakistan in the aspects of linguistic preference and discursive approaches, which ultimately influence the perception by citizens embracing the elements of balanced discourse or foregrounding moral ideological positions.

Finally, the analysis of data revealed that in several ways, there were trends:

1. Dawn and The Nation mostly have offered emotionally colored language to religious or humanitarian catastrophes, but as the former have inclined to pursue a humanitarian policy, so has the latter, giving more consideration to national and moral positions.
2. Reports had more likelihood of placing Islam and Muslim identities into the victimhood, resilience and moral uprightness framework and yet at certain points maintained in tandem with the world-wide discourse that equates Islam to conflict.
3. CDA paradigm could spot the slightest examples of ideology, i.e. selective lexical application (extremist, militant, faith, sacred values and values) that influenced the perception of readers.

Conclusion

The current paper showed that Pakistani print media, specifically, Dawn and the Nation, influenced the opinion of the publics regarding Islam and Muslims in quite remarkable ways in terms of the discursive and lingual strategies. The results showed that Dawn was more likely to use balanced and contextualized language which indicates that he or she is more analytical

and has a more neutral way of framing whereas The Nation was more inclined to use emotive and ideologically colored language that focused on moral and political narratives. This difference corresponded to the earlier studies of the construction of ideological stances by media outlets and the way they portrayed Islam based on their editorial leanings (Alluhaidah, 2023; Bajuwaiber, 2024; Li and Zhang, 2022). This work also supported the role of interrogating the idea of media representation on a textual level, as well as regarding it through the prism of the social and political dimension, where the discursive activities were used to construct perceptions of the society, ethical judgment, and collective values (Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000; Fairclough, 1995; Elamin, 2024). With the mention of such trends, this study helped to derive a broader perspective of how media has perpetrated and challenged stereotypes of Muslims in the modern Pakistani society.

The comparative analysis highlighted the subtle means through which the print media either confronted or supported hegemonic accounts on Islam. The strategy of the publication, in which Dawn focused more on the contextualization and framing of news diplomatically (as opposed to purely providing the news), seemed to encourage more critical reflection and resulted in more informed discussions within the population at large, and The Nation approach, with its emotive and moralized news coverage, seemed to create a division between the audiences based on political ideology, which reflected more far-reaching socio-political goals (Muhammad & Ismail, 2024; Halim Rane, 2021; Karim, 2006). Such results were not isolated as research on media portraying of Muslims around the world observed that media were frequently used as the potent means of influence over the way people perceived Islam and reinforced the social inequalities (Elgamri, 2011; Li & Zhang, 2022). Thus, this study highlights that responsible media coverage is necessary, which should be more value-representing and opposing Islamophobic discourse with taking into consideration the editorialism of ideologies (Alluhaidah, 2023; Elamin, 2024).

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Appendix

#	News Source	Title	Date	Link
1	Dawn	US anti-Muslim incidents rose about 70pc in 2024	31 July 2024	https://www.dawn.com/news/1849110
2	Dawn	Police get fatwa declaring wheelie, kite flying, aerial firing 'un-Islamic'	22 January 2025	https://www.dawn.com/news/1886860

3	Dawn	Call for greater inclusivity of minorities	28 April 2024	https://www.dawn.com/news/1830057?utm
4	Dawn	<i>The state's conduct belies its claims of upholding 'Muslim interests'.</i>	<u>10</u> October,202 <u>5</u>	https://www.dawn.com/news/1947795?utm
5	The Nation	Propaganda and the Muslim World	29 January 2025	https://www.nation.com.pk/29-Jan-2025/propaganda-and-the-muslim-world
6	The Nation	CM calls for global action against Islamophobia	March 16, 2025	https://www.nation.com.pk/16-Mar-2025/cm-calls-for-global-action-against-islamophobia
7	The Nation	Gaza is Bleeding While Muslims Feast	25 March,2025	https://www.nation.com.pk/25-Mar-2025/gaza-is-bleeding-while-muslims-feast
8	The Nation	Increasing Religious Intolerance	28 October 2024	https://www.nation.com.pk/28-Oct-2024/increasing-religious-intolerance